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14. ABSTRACT

General Douglas MacArthur spent the better part of his life making difficult decisions in the face of uncertainty; however, in Korea he mad some critical miscalculations. In order to broaden the professional awareness of officers, this paper will address two questions. First, what impact does political input have on operational design? In order to answer this question the political impact on time, space, and force will be addressed by analyzing aspects of Gen Douglas MacArthur's operational leadership, vision, and design during the Korean War. It will explain how his decisions were measured and focused on achieving military objectives congruent with the strategic goal even though he failed to anticipate the political decisions that dangerously limited his freedom of action. Second, is the question of how can operational commanders today perform better than MacArthur? Using MacArthur as an illustrative example, this essay argues that the American political system is the most critical system in today's environment for the military commander to understand. This paper will also conclude that commanders can effectively develop and adjust plans in ways that achieve desirable results even when the political situation may limit means and methods. This can be done by applying the elements of operational vision and converting that mental picture into achievable objectives. The best way to accomplish this translation is through an analytical and regressive decision making process.

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General Douglas MacArthur: Successes and Failures on the Korean Peninsula

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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23 April 2008

Abstract

General Douglas MacArthur: Successes and Failures on the Korean Peninsula

General Douglas MacArthur spent the better part of his life making difficult decisions in the face of uncertainty; however, in Korea he mad some critical miscalculations. In order to broaden the professional awareness of officers, this paper will address two questions. First, what impact does political input have on operational design? In order to answer this question the political impact on time, space, and force will be addressed by analyzing aspects of Gen Douglas MacArthur's operational leadership, vision, and design during the Korean War. It will explain how his decisions were measured and focused on achieving military objectives congruent with the strategic goal even though he failed to anticipate the political decisions that dangerously limited his freedom of action. Second, is the question of how can operational commanders today perform better than MacArthur? Using MacArthur as an illustrative example, this essay argues that the American political system is the most critical system in today's environment for the military commander to understand. This paper will also conclude that commanders can effectively develop and adjust plans in ways that achieve desirable results even when the political situation may limit means and methods. This can be done by applying the elements of operational vision and converting that mental picture into achievable objectives. The best way to accomplish this translation is through an analytical and regressive decision making process.

Introduction

    The recent resignation of Admiral William Fallon, Commander U.S. Central Command, brings again to the forefront an issue that has long plagued America's civilian and military leadership.[1] The question at the center of the argument is simple. Who should be fighting America's wars, the generals or the politicians? On the surface the answer seems straightforward. The U.S. Constitution and other governing regulation place the politicians in a position of authority over the military.[2] On the other hand, few politicians are well versed and practiced in the art of war, so it stands to reason that arm chair generalship from bureaucrats in Washington has over the years increased the complexity of the commanders military decision making process at all levels of war—strategic, operational, and tactical.[3] The uncertainty inherent in war[4] is confusing enough without the added friction of political pressures, constraints, and changes. It would be convenient for the military professional to change the system. The government could create a civil-military relationship that would provide the military professional more freedom of action to pursue the objective without having to react to the Washington bureaucracy. It would reduce the friction between the political leadership who make the policy and those who carry it out. In doing so, it would conceivably reduce the chance of repeating history. The generals would no longer be forced to limit themselves to anything less than decisive military victory. Of course, it is true that changing the way U.S. civilian and military authorities interact would be contrary to the country's democratic foundation. It would only

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[1] Mackubin Thomas Owens, "The Fall of Admiral Fallon." *The Weekly Standard*, 12 March 2008, http://www.weeklystandard.com/ (accessed 3 April 2008).
[2] U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2.
[3] General Tony Zinni and Tony Koltz, *The Battle for Peace: A Frontline Vision of America's Power and Purpose* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillian, 2006), 129. General Zinni said, "Our nation's confusion about the role in the world is magnified by our failure to organize ourselves appropriately to achieve our goals there. There is a disconnect between the foxhole and government system."
[4] U.S. Marine Corps. Warfighting, Marine Corps Doctrine Publication (MCDP) 1 (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1997), 7.

serve to dangerously factionalize the military's loyalty and potentially lead to what the founders

of the Constitution feared, a military state.[5] It would encourage those like Admiral Fallon to

actively undermine the policies of the popularly elected.[6] Moreover, it would attempt to change

the very purpose of war. The true function of which is to achieve a political end through violent

means.[7] After all, the soldier takes an oath to defend the Constitution, and in order to "well and

faithfully discharge his duties" it is important for him to understand his profession.[8] He must

possess and master operational leadership.[9] The first trait of which is "full acceptance of

absolute primacy of policy and strategy."[10] He must understand how strategic decisions affect

those operational factors—time, space, and force—critical to operational design.[11] He must link

actions to effects to objectives while applying the various fundamentals of war fighting.[12] This

can be a delicate balancing act,[13] especially when the political direction limits his ability to apply

the tenets of operational leadership and the principles of war.[14] A military professional must be

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[5] James Madison, John Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (London, England: Penguin Books, 1987), 318-322.

[6] Owens, "The Fall of Admiral Fallon."

[7] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 69, 87, 605.

[8] United States Army, Oaths of Enlistment and Oaths of Office, http://www.history.army.mil/faq/oaths.htm (accessed 13 April 2008).

[9] Milan N. Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Milan Vego, 2007), X-5, X-6.

[10] Ibid. X-47, X- 48. The following tenets of operational leadership are what Vego describes as the most important: "Full acceptance of absolute primacy of policy and strategy, firm and unwavering focus on the objective, balancing of ends and means, obtaining and maintaining freedom of action, exercising the initiative, taking of high and prudent risks, selection of a proper sector of main effort (thrust), concentration in the sector of main effort (thrust), application of overwhelming power at a decisive place and time, indirect approach, speed of action, acting unpredictably and achieving surprise, creativeness and mental agility, boldness, jointness."

[11] Ibid. III-3.

[12] Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Operational Planning, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0. (Washington, DC: CJCS, 26 December 2006), III-12, III-13.

[13] Greg Grant, "Balancing Act," *Government Executive*, October 2007, 31.

[14] Norman M. Wade, *The Joint Forces Operational Warfighting Smartbook: Guide to Joint Doctrine, Operational Warfighting & Theater/Campaign Planning* (Lakeland, FL: The Lighting Press, 2003), 1-12, 1-13. The principles of war as listed are the following: "1. Objective: Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective. 2. Offensive: Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. 3. Mass: Concentrate the effects of combat power at the most advantageous place and time to achieve decisive results. 4. Economy of Force: Allocate minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts. 5. Maneuver: Place the enemy in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of combat power. 6. Unity of Command: Ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective. 7. Security: Never permit the enemy to acquire unexpected advantage.

prepared to execute operations in support of policy regardless of whether he agrees or disagrees. His planning must remain flexible and adaptable to account for the uncertainty that is inherent in any crisis.[15] It is incumbent on the commander to adapt his approach within the broader context of the nation's military-political system.[16] In addition, his efforts should not be wasted rearranging the bureaucratic systems of other agencies despite how inefficient they may be.

History is full of examples of war that were complicated by friction between politicians and warriors. Lincoln and McClellan, Johnson and Westmoreland, Truman and MacArthur are a few whose disagreements were created by the real or perceived divergence of policy and practice.[17] In order to broaden the professional awareness of officers, this paper will address two questions. First, what impact does political input have on operational design? In order to answer this question the political impact on time, space, and force will be addressed by analyzing aspects of General Douglas MacArthur's operational leadership, vision, and design during the Korean War. It will explain how his decisions were measured and focused on achieving military objectives congruent with the strategic goal even though he failed to anticipate the political decisions that dangerously limited his freedom of action. Second, is the question of how can operational commanders today perform better than MacArthur? Using MacArthur as an illustrative example, this essay argues that the American political system[18] is the most critical system[19] in today's environment for the military commander to understand. This paper will also conclude that

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8. Surprise: Strike at a time or place or in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared. 9. Simplicity: Prepare clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders to ensure thorough understanding."
[15] Paul K. Davis and James P. Kahan, *Theory and Methods for Supporting High Level Military Decisionmaking*, RAND Report: Project Air Force (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007), 6-7.
[16] Talbot C. Imlay and Monica Duffy Toft, eds., *Fog of Peace and War Planning: Military and Strategic Planning Under Uncertainty* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 257-258.
[17] Owens, "The Fall of Admiral Fallon."
[18] For the context of this paper the American political system refers to the parts or input that affect the commander's operational environment.
[19] Joint Operational Planning, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 defines a system as "a functionally related group of elements forming a complex whole."

commanders can effectively develop and adjust plans in ways that achieve desirable results even when the political situation may limit means and methods. This can be done by applying the elements of operational vision and converting that mental picture into achievable objectives.[20] The best way to accomplish this translation is through an analytical and regressive decision making process.[21]

MacArthur and Korea

After leading the world to victory in World War II, the United States was apparently caught off guard when the forces of communist North Korea attacked south across the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950.[22] By August of the same year North Korean forces had essentially pushed their enemy into the southeastern corner of the peninsula around the city of Pusan.[23] General Douglas MacArthur was given the task "to repel the armed attack and restore international peace and security to the area."[24] The national strategic objective was limited during the early days of the war, but the purpose of the conflict would change several times during his tenure.[25] The one part of the conflict that did not change, however, was the limits placed on his methods and means by his superiors.[26]

Contrary to opinion in Washington, MacArthur orchestrated a brilliant amphibious assault at Inchon that swiftly led to the recapture of Seoul and the withdrawal of North Korean forces from South Korea.[27] James Reed in his article suggests that this event was a return to the status quo ante and arguably the achievement of MacArthur's original goal, but the national strategic

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[20] Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice*, XI-35.
[21] James W. Reed, "Should Deterrence Fail: War Termination in Campaign Planning," *Parameters*, Summer 1993, 48.
[22] Martin Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, Inter-University Case Program #92 (Indianapolis, ID: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), p. 8.
[23] David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 2007), 253.
[24] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 10.
[25] Ibid., 9, 10, 21, 46.
[26] Edgar J. Fredricks, *MacArthur: His Mission and Meaning* (Philadelphia, PA: Whitmore Publishing, 1986), 1.
[27] Reed, "Should Deterrence Fail: War Termination in Campaign Planning," 46-47.

objective changed. In reaction, MacArthur pushed the fight north of the demarcation line. After

the intervention of Chinese forces in November 1950, the conflict on the Korean peninsula raged

on for the next two and a half years. Interestingly, the armistice signed on 27 July 1953 returned

the peninsula to the same circumstances present after the initial recapture of Seoul in September

1950. This was a concession on the part of the United States as it did not achieve the former

political objective of reuniting the north with the south.[28] The United States had lost.[29] A brief

analysis of the discord among political objectives, limitations, and their impact on MacArthur's

use of available time, space, and force will illustrate why the war ended the way it did.

　　Even before the hostilities began, U.S. policy in the Far East limited MacArthur's ability to

respond. In retrospect, he concluded that North Korean aggression recognized "that timidity

breeds conflict, and courage often prevents it."[30] The timidity in which he was referring was that

of the U.S. State Department demonstrated in their strategy that prevented the heavy arming of

South Korean troops.[31] He believed that the policy not only invited belligerence by the north but

left the south unprepared for an adequate response.[32] In 1949 U.S. forces completely withdrew

from the Korean peninsula mirroring the Soviet withdrawal of the previous year.[33] In addition,

the Secretary of State announced in 1950 that the UN alone was vested with the responsibility of

a secure Korea.[34] So with these events, the U.S. policy was clearly focused on the security of

Europe and the response to Soviet expansion there, not on the security or eventual unification of

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Fredricks, *MacArthur: His Mission and Meaning*, 5-8.
[30] General Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 330.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 328.
[33] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 8.
[34] Ibid.

the Korean peninsula.[35] As a result, MacArthur's ability to effectively respond to communist expansion in Asia was adversely affected.

The influence of this policy on operational factor force is evident in several ways. First and most obvious was its impact on physical factor force. It significantly limited the combat potential of the South Koreans.[36] They were outnumbered 2 to 1.[37] Even with American air and naval support, the lack of heavy weapons, tanks, and artillery further imbalanced the South Korean's combat power relative to the well equipped and Soviet trained north.[38] Second, it also impacted certain intangible[39] aspects of factor force on the northern side. The weak South Korean defense combined with the absence of U.S. ground force support and the apparent U.S. policy of European containment not only set physical conditions ripe for communist aggression, it went a long way to embolden the motivation, will, and audacity of the communist decision makers.[40] It also allowed the North Koreans to seize the initiative by achieving strategic, operational, and tactical surprise forcing MacArthur to initially fight the war on ground of the enemy's choosing not his own.[41]

This prewar policy also negatively impacted the operational factors of time and space. By separating the U.S. forces by significant amounts of physical space—the distance from Korea to Japan—it extended the length of the American's initial lines of operation and communication resulting in increased response time.[42] For the same reason it had the reverse effect on the North Korean force. It allowed them the precious time needed to cross the 38th parallel and gain space

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[35] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 337.
[36] Ibid., 330.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 333-334.
[39] Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice*, III-35.
[40] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 330.
[41] Ibid., 333.
[42] Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of an American Hero* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2000), 64-65.

as they captured Seoul and fought south toward Pusan.[43] After the U.N. Security Council passed

their second resolution calling for the restoration of international peace, the strategic objective

was clear—[44] a return to the status quo ante.[45] With this declaration, it was obvious to

MacArthur that the U.S. was going to war.[46] He was, however, surprised when the politicians in

Washington refused to approve the material and troop support he estimated necessary to achieve

his objective.[47] Undeterred by this political decision, he began "to chart the [theater] strategic

course which would make…victory possible."[48]

In so doing, his ability to operationally think allowed him to envision the situation that would

exist when he had accomplished his mission.[49] Thus, he was able to accept considerable risk to

his force and mitigate the risk to overall mission accomplishment by appropriately balancing

time, space, and force. As he put it, "My only chance [to slow down the North Korean Army]

was to commit my forces piecemeal as rapidly as I could.... By this method of buying time for

space I could rapidly build up a force at Pusan, which would serve as a base for future

operations."[50] The future operation he was referring to was the bold amphibious assault that

would eventually occur at Inchon; however, that operation would have to wait almost 4 months

while MacArthur developed the situation and set conditions favorable for success.[51]

Four days after the commencement of hostilities, General MacArthur traveled to Korea and

visited the front.[52] This action alone gave him a comprehensive understanding of the military

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[43] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 334, 336, 339.
[44] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 10.
[45] Reed, "Should Deterrence Fail: War Termination in Campaign Planning," 46-47.
[46] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 331.
[47] Ibid., 337.
[48] Ibid., 335.
[49] Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice*, XI-35.
[50] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 335- 336.
[51] G. W. Smith, Jr., "The Blinding Sand of MacArthur's Hourglass: The Race to Seoul," *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 2000, 82.
[52] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 332-333.

problem. Based on what he personally saw that day, he was able to accurately estimate the situation and substantiate his previous hypothesis that the South Korean forces were ill prepared and unable to defend their territory.[53] From this estimate he further concluded that U.S. Naval and air power alone would not be enough to achieve his military objective.[54] Consequently, he was able to report the situation accurately to Washington and request the authorization to use ground troops on the peninsula.[55] With this request approved, he anticipated the North Korean reaction.[56]

   According to MacArthur, he expected that the North Korean commander would change his tactics once resisted by American forces. That is exactly what happened. Although profoundly outnumbered, MacArthur ordered the piecemeal deployment of forces from Japan to Korea causing the North Korean forces to deploy in a conventional line, slowing their advance south, and buying MacArthur time to reinforce the perimeter around Pusan.[57] He relied upon his intuition and balanced risk versus gain in the face of uncertainty. He envisioned the enemy's weakness and exploited it. He accepted significant risk to his forces in order to trade space for time.[58] His decision to quickly deploy troops in relatively small numbers based on the anticipated response of his enemy demonstrated his military brilliance.[59]

   In two other moves separate from the Korean he confirmed his focus on the theater as a whole, not only the Korean peninsula.[60] First, he ordered the Japanese to increase their defensive

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 334.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 336.
[57] Ibid., 336-339.
[58] Ibid., 334-336.
[59] Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice*, XI-24.
[60] Milan Vego, *Operational Thinkers and Practitioners*, NWC 1084 (Newport, RI: Joint Military Operations Department, 2006), 7.

forces by 100,000.[61] A prudent move considering Chinese and Soviet intentions were unclear.[62]

It was certainly important because he envisioned the eventual liquidation of the American

occupation force to support his scheme in Korea.[63] More interesting was his controversial trip to

Formosa and meeting with the Chinese Nationalist leader, Chaing Kai-shek. Having been given

the responsibility to defend Formosa—an enlargement of factor space without a corresponding

increase in means (factor force)—from Chinese attack, it made good military sense for the

commander to visit, and as he said "make [his] own military assessment of the situation."[64]

Chaing Kai-shek offered ground forces to MacArthur, an offer MacArthur was forced to refuse

by Washington.[65] However, the fact that MacArthur took the time to visit and nurture the

relationship with Chaing Kai-shek confirms that MacArthur had a broad understanding of the

military and political problem. MacArthur understood what Washington did not. First, the

Chinese Nationalist Army represented combat potential in the theater.[66] Second, Chaing Kai-

shek's nationalist movement represented political and moral power.[67] Indeed, MacArthur

understood that both were key factor force considerations that may be needed in pursuit of his

military objective in Korea.[68]

MacArthur's complete understanding of the linkages and interrelationships among policy,

strategy, and operational art is most obvious when analyzing the bold and daring invasion at

Inchon.[69] According to Jeffery Bradford, it was not the invasion itself, though, which revealed

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[61] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 337.
[62] Ibid., 333.
[63] Ibid., 333, 335, 337.
[64] Ibid., 339-340.
[65] Ibid., 340-341.
[66] Dennis D. Wainstock, *Truman, MacArthur and the Korean War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 39-40.
[67] Fredricks, *MacArthur: His Mission and Meaning*, 17-20.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Col. Lamar Tooke and Col. Ralph Allen, *Strategic Intuition and the Art of War*, NWC 1021 (Newport, RI: Joint Military Operations Department, reprinted from *Military Review*, Vol. 75, No. 2, March/April 1995, pp. 9, 11-18), 16.

the most about his leadership. The larger part of his acumen was demonstrated by the early development of a comprehensive idea. His actions from the beginning until the retaking of Seoul in September 1950 were not separate, reactionary events. On the contrary, they were linked and sequenced actions as part of a complete operational scheme designed to achieve the military objective.[70]

The piecemeal deployment of forces around Pusan achieved its goal of preventing the North Korean advance south, but that aim was not an end unto itself.[71] Long before that action was complete and even before its success was assured, MacArthur, during the first week of July 1950, ordered his staff to begin the planning for a major amphibious assault at Inchon.[72] The Pusan operation not only bought MacArthur time for planning and preparation, it provided him with a base of operations for one of two elements that would be used in a large pincer movement designed to achieve decisive results.[73] His ability to envision multiple phases of the campaign months in advance allowed him to set conditions for victory long before decisive actions were to occur.[74]

MacArthur's counteroffensive at Inchon failed to completely destroy the North Korean Army as he had envisioned, but there was no doubt that he had routed the communists from the south.[75] Had the objective been attained? Although there was common agreement before Inchon that an arbitrary boundary should not prevent the complete annihilation of the enemy,[76] MacArthur in *Reminiscences* stated, "The golden moment to transmute our victory at Inchon into a political

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[70] Jeffery A. Bradford, "MacArthur, Inchon and the Art of Battle Command," *Military Review*, March/April 2001, 83.
[71] Ibid.
[72] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 346.
[73] Ibid., 352.
[74] Bradford, "MacArthur, Inchon and the Art of Battle Command," 83.
[75] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 14.
[76] Ibid.

peace had arrived."[77] This is strong evidence that MacArthur not only understood the limits of

his objective, but believed that by attaining it he had created conditions for peace. Since peace

was not at hand though, MacArthur asked for and received permission to cross the 38th parallel.[78]

On the same day, 1 October 1950, he demanded the surrender of North Korean forces.[79] It was

not until 8 October 1950, after there was sufficient time for North Korea to respond, did he order

troops north of the demarcation line.[80] This is also convincing substantiation that MacArthur's

invasion of the north was not a forgone conclusion. In fact, one can argue that his proposed

public announcement of the crossing, rejected by the Joint Chiefs,[81] combined with the demand

for surrender may have been just the added courage needed to achieve peace. Instead,

MacArthur believed that political timidity and appeasement would serve only to continue the

war.[82] He was correct. On 28 September his military objective changed.[83]

Directed by the Joint Chiefs, MacArthur was ordered to pursue and destroy the North Korean

forces north.[84] The political goal, although not stated by the UN General Assembly for seven

more days, was to bring about the unification of the Koreas under an independent and democratic

government.[85] A strong argument can be made that MacArthur's vision did not extend far

beyond Inchon since he clearly thought the politicians would sue for peace after he achieved his

objective of pushing the North Koreans back across the demarcation line.[86] However, the fact

that he immediately replied to the Joint Chiefs with his preliminary plan for the attack north

suggests that he at a minimum had thought about the sequel if not specifically planned for the

[77] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 357.
[78] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 14.
[79] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 359.
[80] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 2.
[81] Ibid., 18.
[82] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 357.
[83] Ibid., 358.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 20-21.
[86] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 357.

eventuality.[87] However, there can be no doubt that he was restricted in his new endeavor.[88] This was something that MacArthur had not anticipated.[89] The specific restrictions were the following: 1) to use only South Korean forces in the provinces that edged the borders of Manchuria and the Soviet Union, 2) not to cross the Manchurian or Soviet borders in any circumstance without first receiving authority from Washington, and 3) to engage communist Chinese forces in Korea only if it would offer "reasonable chance of success."[90]

In addition to these specified restrictions, the somewhat abrupt change in mission and policy did serve to unbalance operational factors space, time, and force relative to the new objective. First, the addition of North Korea as battle space nearly doubled the size of the operations area without any significant increase in physical force.[91] The fact that he could not use U.S. forces in the Northern provinces exacerbated this problem even more.[92] Second, the rugged and mountainous terrain of the north challenged the fundamentals of unity of command and mutual support between the Eighth Army and X Corps as they pursued the enemy north toward the Yalu River.[93] Third, the bases of operation at Inchon and Pusan, which were marginally adequate to support offensive and defensive operations in the vicinity of the demarcation line, were inadequate to support operations far north of the 38th parallel.[94] Finally, the decision to conduct offensive operations in North Korea threatened the Chinese enough to enter the war.[95] This combined with the restraint of not using air power north of the Yalu significantly reduced

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[87] Ibid., 358.
[88] Ibid., 368.
[89] Ibid., 370-371, 375.
[90] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 16.
[91] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 367-373, 375.
[92] Ibid., 365.
[93] Ibid., 359-360.
[94] Ibid., 359.
[95] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 20.

MacArthur's ability to apply the concepts of depth and simultaneity resulting in a significant combat power reduction relative to the enemy.[96]

Even though there was an apparent miscalculation by the national intelligence apparatus and MacArthur as to Chinese intentions prior to November 1950,[97] MacArthur did a splendid job rebalancing the operational factors in pursuit of his new objective. He developed and executed a plan that would establish a line of troops across the waistline of the northern peninsula with the Eighth army seizing Pyongyang by land and the X Corps seizing Wonsan by sea.[98] This plan provides another example of MacArthur's ability to translate his thinking from vision to an executable plan while at the same time balancing the operational factors. His appreciation for the physical space of the northern peninsula is evidenced by his accounting for the impact of terrain on logistics, tactical maneuver, command, and control. There was, however, a miscalculation. The logistical risk was calculated on the basis that the army would be fighting a weakened North Korean force, so the advance of his soldiers north toward the Yalu River was slowed when they were met with more organized, Chinese forces.[99] By 2 November 1950 the 24th Infantry Division was encountering Chinese tanks within 15 miles of the Yalu, the Marines had reported the sighting of 3 Chinese divisions, and elements of the First Cavalry had discovered 5 more communist divisions in there zone.[100] By 6 November 1950 there was no

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[96] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 361, 365.

[97] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 19-20.

[98] MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 359-360. MacArthur describes his decision making process: "The supply situation at Seoul was insufficient to maintain both the Eighth Army and X Corps, and it was essential to establish a new port of supply entrance on the east coast. Due to tide difficulties at Inchon…and the destruction of the railroad from Pusan to Seoul…Wonsan was chosen as the new supply base. Tactically, it could bring flank pressure if necessary, for the capture of Pyongyang. It was essential also to secure the eastern corridor of the peninsula….the east and west coast of the peninsula is cut by a spinal mountain range which renders lateral communication extremely difficult…and movement of supplies across the peninsula completely unpredictable….The terrain was such that there was little prospect that the enemy might drive an effective wedge between the two forces…[so] both the Eighth Army and X Corps were under direct control and central co-ordination of the general headquarters until the would meet in the north, when united command responsibility and co-ordination would pass to General Walker."

[99] Ibid., 365.

[100] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 30.

doubt in the MacArthur's mind that China had entered the war, and this was a contingency that everyone had feared but no one had planned.[101]

In the case of MacArthur's counteroffensive in Korea, there were many tangible and intangible inputs that affected the means by which he accomplished his end, but the fact that he envisioned his objective long before he achieved it allowed himself, his staff, and his subordinate units a future point in which to focus their planning efforts.[102] In contrast, his inability to anticipate political input that was incompatible with war fighting principles prevented him form achieving his operational objective and the strategic end state of Korean unification.[103] It is correct to conclude that MacArthur's operational vision was the precursor to success at Inchon; however, his inability to foresee political restrictions and adapt accordingly resulted in plans and actions that were perhaps the antecedent for his eventual failure. Consequently, the modern day commander must take into account the critical nature of this prerequisite—adaptation to account for the input of the American political system—and utilize his tools to develop courses of action, branches, and sequels that are militarily correct and acceptable within the constraints and restraints of the operational environment.[104] Chief among these tools is the planning process.

Planning: An Uncertain Process

Lieutenant General Van Riper defines military planning effortlessly. It is making a decision in order to solve a problem. More specifically, it is a method used to "make decisions in anticipation of future action."[105] He agrees with Vego when he says that effective planning requires a commander to have a vision of the future. Without vision, a commander can not

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[101] Ibid., 31.
[102] Bradford, "MacArthur, Inchon and the Art of Battle Command," 83.
[103] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 21.
[104] Davis and Kahan, *Theory and Methods for Supporting High Level Military Decisionmaking*, xiii.
[105] Paul K. Van Riper, *Planning for and Applying Military Force: An Examination of Terms* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, *Letort Paper* series, 2006), 2.

determine the end state.[106] With no end state in mind the commander can not appropriately account for and balance the operational factors of time, space, and force. He can not assesses risk or arrange for mitigation. Simply put, a commander can not chart his strategic course if he does not first know where he is going.[107] Without a proverbial road map, the commander can not through operational design connect actions to effects to objectives. Without accounting for the American political system he will not react well to changes caused by that part of the environment.

   "Sun Tzu said that knowing the enemy is half the battle. He considered knowing one's self the second half of that equation. If Sun Tzu were alive today and participated in a planning session, he would probably conclude that the [joint intelligence preparation of the environment] provides the modern commander a better understanding of both friendly and enemy systems and in so doing maximizes the prospect for victory." [108] He would certainly conclude that the American political system falls squarely within the *one's self* part of his proverb. "It has also been said that no plan survives first contact with the enemy. Hence the adage, the enemy has a vote." [109] In MacArthur's case the Washington bureaucrats also had a vote. Accordingly, the commander must use the joint intelligence preparation of the environment (JIPOE) to fully analyze the friendly political system in order to foresee effects on his operational environment. He should also use the planning process to develop branches and sequels to account for those potential changes in political viewpoint. He should not misunderstand the steps of the process as

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[106] Ibid., 2, 13-14.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 84, quoted from Jason Brown, "Wargaming: Is the Juice Worth the Squeeze?" (research paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, EL 599, 2008), 1.

[109] Helmuth von Moltke originally said, "Therefore no plan of operations extends with any certainty beyond the first conduct with the main hostile force." Quote verified at http://www.ralphkeyes.com/pages/books/quote/excerpt.htm accessed February 2, 2008, quoted from Jason Brown, "Wargaming: Is the Juice Worth the Squeeze?" (research paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, EL 599, 2008), 1.

a predictive or infallible procedure.[110] It should, however, be understood as an analytical process

that bounds complex problems allowing intuitive and experiential inputs from a multitude of

military practitioners.[111]

Joint Pub 5-0 defines JIPOE "as the analytical process to intelligence assessments, estimates

and other intelligence products."[112] It is a four step process that aids the commander in

understanding the operational environment.[113] Current doctrine defines the operational

environment as a complex amalgamation of systems—military, information, infrastructure,

social, economic, and political.[114] It clearly recognizes that the operational environment or

"battlespace extends beyond the geographic dimensions of land, air, sea, and space."[115] Although

it does account generally for those friendly effects, popular and political, that influence the

environment, it is clearly biased toward those effects caused by the adversary. It focuses much

more on the enemy than it does the friendly. Perhaps in times past before the advent of global

information exchange, it was appropriate to focus analysis more on the enemy. However, a

balanced approach is more prudent today since the current strategic environment is characterized

by relatively inefficient political bureaucracies that make decisions frequently based on public

opinion, an opinion that is so closely connected to the front line by television and the internet.

By giving the effects created by the friendly forces as much analysis as those created by enemy

forces, the commander can balance the analytical process resulting in an expanded understanding

of the military problem. Therefore, it stands to reason that a more complete perspective of the

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[110] EL 599, block 1, week 1 and block 3, week 8 and 9 in class lecture (Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2008).
[111] Joint Operational Planning, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, GL-15.
[112] Ibid., III-6.
[113] Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Tactic, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (JP) 2-01.3. (Washington, DC: CJCS, 24 May 2000), II-1.
[114] Joint Operational Planning, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, III-17.
[115] Joint Tactic, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (JP) 2-01.33, II-2.

dilemma will yield a broader vision. The intent derived from this enhanced vision will

undoubtedly increase the chance of turning out a better result.

Counterargument

It is difficult to argue against the idea of broadening a commander's perspective. It is much

easier to argue that military professionals should spend time trying to change the system as a

whole instead of transforming themselves and learning to live and operate efficiently within a

relatively inefficient political system. General Anthony Zinni suggests that "there is disconnect

between the foxhole and government systems." He attributes this disconnect to stovepipes that

result from the government's vertical organization. He contrasts this vertical system with that of

the military—more linear—suggesting that a flatter organizational structure is better because the

components of a linear organization are more connected. He says that the more connected

components would eliminate vertical stovepipes enabling them to work better together toward

the achievement of a common goal. He thinks the current system of governmental organization

is broken and must be fixed to account for the intricate and fast paced nature of the new strategic

environment. He suggests that the solution lies in integration. Not by developing independent

organizations, Department of Homeland Security for example, whose primary function is to

force integration, but by using "the existing organizations…each of them—Defense, State,

Intelligence, Justice…to contribute and be represented in the new structure."[116] A structure that

would be birthed through legislation in the same way the military was transformed by

Goldwater-Nichols.[117]

This argument is interesting and may very well work if implemented. It would perhaps

overtime force integration or at least better cooperation through interdependency. However,

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[116] Zinni and Koltz, *The Battle for Peace: A Frontline Vision of America's Power and Purpose*, 129-133.
[117] Ibid., 131.

there is a flaw in the foundation of his argument. General Zinni believes that legislation and the accompanying authorities will flatten the interagency resulting in less bureaucracy and fewer stovepipes. He believes it will decentralize decision making. In so doing, the extraordinary volume of information would be synthesized at lower levels reducing the complexity of the problem for higher level policy makers.[118] Goldwater-Nichols removed one level of bureaucracy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the operational chain. Arguably though, this reorganization created more officialdom with the establishment of unified commands.[119] One could argue that the laborious task of being president or secretary of defense has become even more complex after Goldwater-Nichols. They must balance priorities and informational inputs form six geographic combatant commanders instead of the chairman and his staff alone. One thing that Goldwater-Nichols did not change is the authority vested in the president and the defense secretary. It did not change their responsibility. They still have to make the final decision. Therefore, one can conclude that reorganizing the interagency will not change the fact that the president shoulders the burden of decision making at the end of the day. In the same way the president relies on his defense secretary and combatant commanders he also relies on his cabinet. New legislation would carry with it no new authorities. It would just shuffle the buck of information synthesis around the table. Perhaps legislation would restructure the cabinet. The various functional secretaries could be replaced by secretaries with a regional focus, but at decision time the authority will still lie in the hands of the president. With this authority comes the responsibility of integration.

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[118] Ibid., 129-133.
[119] National Defense University Library, "Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986," http://www.ndu.edu/library/goldnich/goldnich.html (accessed 22 April 2008).

Conclusion

As General Zinni suggests, members of government and the military face new and complicated problems today that are unlike any other in modern history,[120] but the dilemma lies not in the problem but within the decision maker. The challenge is to learn to make good decisions in the face of uncertain information.[121] General MacArthur faced uncertain decisions for the better part of his life. He became pretty good at it as evidenced by his historic performance in the Pacific and Korean theaters, but he did occasionally get it wrong. He did not anticipate China's intervention during the Korean conflict,[122] and he certainly did not expect or adequately plan for the limits placed upon him by Washington when he was prosecuting operations north of the 38th parallel.[123] In his case the nation's first experiment with limited war led to the first stalemate in her history. To make sure that history does not repeat itself, the modern military commander must do his best to expand his understanding of the current military-political problem, the difficulty of achieving victory while being limited in ways and means. First, he can submit fully to the primary tenet of operational leadership—primacy of policy.[124] Second, he can adapt his approach by broadening his understanding of the operational environment through balanced analysis of both the enemy and friendly systems. Third, he can develop a more complete end state by applying the elements of operational vision. Finally, he can use an analytical and regressive planning process to determine objectives that will achieve his goal.[125]

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[120] Zinni and Koltz, *The Battle for Peace: A Frontline Vision of America's Power and Purpose*, 130.
[121] Davis and Kahan, *Theory and Methods for Supporting High Level Military Decisionmaking*, 5.
[122] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 19-20.
[123] Lichterman, *To the Yalu and Back*, 30.
[124] Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice*, X47, X-48.
[125] Reed, "Should Deterrence Fail: War Termination in Campaign Planning," 48.

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